

rice river

canoe route



CHIPPEWA NATIONAL FOREST

SUPERVISOR'S OFFICE

www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa

218-335-8600

The Route

The Rice River Canoe Route begins at Clubhouse Lake. Take County 45 from Marcell and follow Clubhouse Campground signs to Clubhouse boat landing. This 19-mile canoe tour is a one or two day trip. Spring is the best time to avoid low water and the route is without portages. A great trip for families!

History

The Rice River flows north to join the Big Fork. Centuries of use by Anishinabe people established the path followed by French, English and American explorers and fur traders to link Hudson Bay and the Mississippi River.

By 1850, the days of the fur companies were past. Surveyors mapped the wilderness from 1867 to 1875 and lumber companies followed, searching for virgin pine stands.

The supply of pine seemed endless, and the Kehle and Dean Logging Company was one of the first in the area. Trees were moved by oxen to the Rice and Big Fork Rivers and floated downstream to sawmills in International Falls. The Keewatin Lumber company built sluice dams on the Rice River at Cameron Lake, Farm Camp and the "Skunk Farm".

Homesteaders worked for logging companies in the winter and spent the rest of the year expanding their farms. The Minneapolis and Rainy River

railroad was built in 1902 and replaced the Rice River as the "highway" through the wilderness.

By 1925, the log drives on the Rice River had passed into history. The four-horse team and logging sleigh replaced by trucks hauling to the small local mills. Nearly a million board feet of "dead head" logs were salvaged in the 1930's from the lakes along the old drive routes.

Points of Interest

A. East Lake Pines—This scenic grove of pines is over 200 years old. A small landing marks the East Lake Pines trail, a very worthwhile stop on your trek. Geology buffs will appreciate the unique (and steep) knob and kettle topography along the trail.

B. Copenhagen Lake: Named after a brand of "snoose" (chewing tobacco) used by lumberjacks. The lake is a backwater of the river channel and was once flooded by a logging dam downstream.

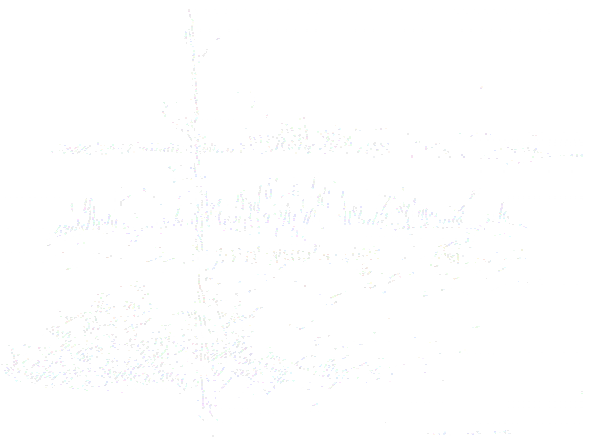
C. Cameron Lake Sluice Dam: Remnants of this logging dam are visible at the outlet. The dam was built to hold back spring runoff and carry logs downstream over stretches normally too shallow. The dam was in use until 1907.

D. Farm Camp: Site of a large 1900 logging camp which included a 4-decker bunk house. Horses were pastured on the natural forage of the opening here. This was an important stopping point for homesteaders entering the "wilderness".

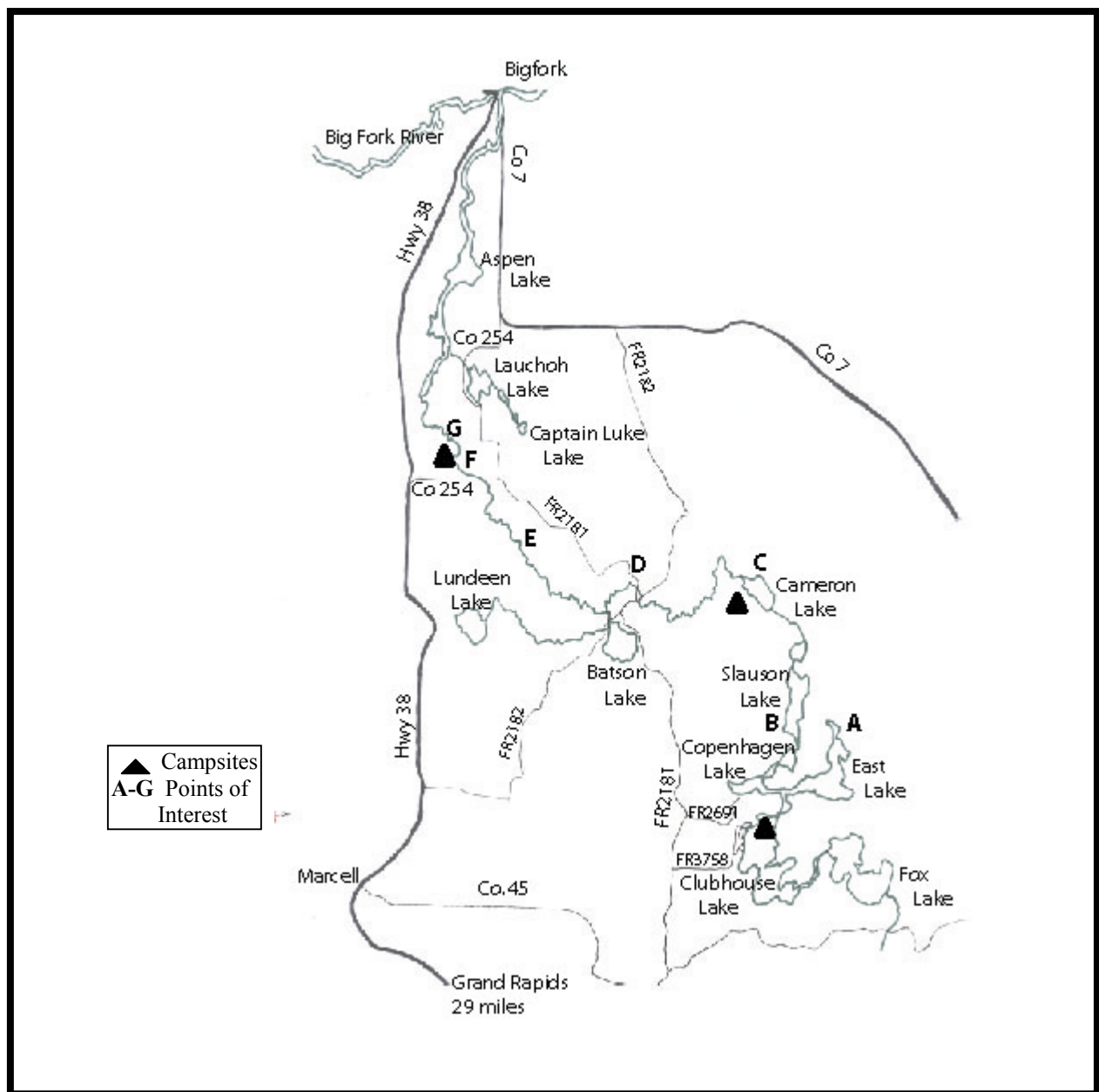
E. Thunstrom Homestead—John S. Thunstrom filed application papers with the Land Office at Cass Lake and established a homestead here in 1907. The old tote road crossed the river on the south end of the field

F. Skunk Farm: Site of a logging camp which later became a small farm. No evidence to show they raised skunks!

G. The third in a series of dams built by the Keewatin Lumber Company. The caretaker of Farm Camp tended all the dams.



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For More Information:

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